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Advance in Chairman Mao's Footprints

by

Chüeh Chung-i (厥中一), old Red Army fighter

(Hsüeh-hsi yü P'i-p'an /Study and Criticism/, No. 10, September 30, 1976)

Respected and beloved Chairman Mao, I could never bring myself to believe that you have left us forever. An old Red Army fighter who served as your bodyguard during the Long March, I felt as if a dagger pierced my heart at hearing the news. For days I could not eat nor sleep. I seemed to have lost something. It also seemed that you were still standing in front of us, continuing to lead us on the Long March, leading us to embark on a new path. Chairman Mao, you will live forever in our hearts. We will always advance in your footprints!

Those who drink water do not forget the well digger; those who make revolution do not forget their leader. Chairman Mao, in these days of grief, we deeply cherish your memory, recalling with profound feeling those glorious years of the Long March, the days and nights we were at your side. All of this seemed to have happened only yesterday. The impressions are so fresh and deep that I will never forget them for the rest of my life!

Respected and beloved Chairman Mao, in those difficult years of the Long March, you toiled and worked tirelessly day and night. Everywhere you went, you always exhorted us time and again: "Take care of the place in which you work before taking care of the place in which you live. Now the most important thing is work; eating and resting are small things." Your admonition made us finally understand your mind. Wherever we went, we would always first get you a desk or stool and put a wooden board on it, so you might spread out a map and place your documents and material on it. So busy were you that you often forgot to eat and rest. Sometimes, you ate a mouthful and then put down the rice bowl; sometimes, when we put a glass of boiled water beside you, you didn't care to take a sip. When, on arriving at a place, the men of the armed forces took their rest, you didn't take yours though you were so tired. We guards were seized with anxiety at seeing you grow thinner and thinner day by day, but it would be so difficult to persuade you to take even a short break. Chairman Mao, you offered every bit of your life to the liberation cause of the people. A thousand poems and ten thousand songs cannot sing the full praises of your heroic exploits!

Respected and beloved Chairman Mao, we shall never forget that at the most crucial moments of the Long March you always ignored personal safety and went up to the front to command the fighting. Whether we were crossing, as speedily as we could, the Chinsha River with its rapid current and violent waves or traversing an uninhabited grassland or contending for Latzuk'ou, an area of vital strategic importance, you marched ahead with

the vanguard units rather than walk with the central forces. In those days, enemy planes fired at us and enemy troops intercepted and pursued us. We guards were really worried about you! But you took it lightly, and what you wanted was to fight. During the battle of Chihlo township, you again went up to the front to command the fighting. I remember vividly that when the battle had just ended, enemy planes were firing in the vicinity of our command headquarters. Suddenly a bomb dropped somewhere 30-40 meters away from you. Alarmed, we four guards rushed toward you and protected you in taking cover at the foot of the slope. But calmly you comforted us: "Take it easy." Although the bomb did not explode when it dropped on the ground, we were so alarmed that we sweated all over. However, when we turned to look at you, you were standing erect on the slope once again commanding the men to fight the battle of annihilation as if nothing had happened around you. The sight of you ignoring personal safety and totally committed to the fate of the Party and the state moved everyone of us to tears. Chairman Mao, your life was a life of fighting. Struggle provided you with the greatest happiness, and work was the primary need of your life. As long as you lived, you never ceased fighting. You offered the energy of your whole life to the liberation cause of the Chinese people, to the liberation cause of the oppressed nations and oppressed peoples throughout the world, to the cause of communism. Your lofty revolutionary spirit set a splendid example for us, and will forever inspire us to march forward on the revolutionary journey.

Respected and beloved Chairman Mao, you went deep among the masses and understood them most. You always linked your heart with those of the revolutionary masses. Wherever you went, you always urged us to chat with the local people and identify ourselves with them. You also carried out penetrating and meticulous investigation and study with a view to finding out the local terrain, the condition of the enemy, the state of the revolutionary force and even local customs and habits. You always explained in plain language to the masses the truth about going north to resist Japan, and the masses in all places were fond of hearing you speak. I remember vividly that when our army entered Kansu during the Long March, reactionary propaganda by the Kuomintang prevented the masses from understanding our Party and army. Moreover, when Po Ku and Chang Wen-t'ien explained our policies to the masses, they used nothing but Marxist-Leninist phrases without explaining the revolution in practical terms. When the villagers met with them, they said uneasily: "Officers, I have work to do." As they said this, they stepped back. At this moment, you came. Affectionately you beckoned the villagers and inquired about their well being. Moreover, in simple terms you told them: "We are sons of the workers and peasants, and we beat the rich and save the poor. We want to overthrow the landlords and gentry and give the land to you." These soothing remarks of yours instantly relieved the masses of their anxieties. You said what they wanted to say, and attracted them at once. Wherever we passed through, the masses came forward and surrounded us from all sides. With eyes wide open, they looked at you, and silently they listened to you speak of the revolution. They also vied with each other in telling you about the local conditions. These moving scenes are so deeply ingrained in my mind that I will never forget them. Chairman Mao, you loved the people most passionately, your

heart was closely linked with those of the people, and the people loved you from the bottom of their hearts. The seeds of revolution you sowed among the masses have now taken root, blossomed and borne fruit across China's great land mass. The Chinese people will definitely advance unswervingly along the revolutionary road opened up by you and will carry the continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat through to the end!

Respected and beloved Chairman Mao, you were most concerned about the men of the armed forces, about the growth of us guards. When the army was passing through a grassland, my leg was bruised and became swollen. You insisted on giving the horse to me to ride on. When I refused, you stopped the horse and helped me get on it. Throughout the Long March, you always insisted on walking and gave your horse to the wounded or the sick! When crossing a river, you were afraid that we might be carried away by the rapid current and asked us to move forward by holding the tail of a horse. While waiting on the opposite shore of the river, you asked the chief clerk to ride the horse back so that the fighters could be dragged across the river one by one. Chairman Mao, you were the supreme leader of the Party and army, yet you treated us ordinary fighters with concern and affection that even surpassed that of our parents!

Chairman Mao, how can I forget the revolutionary years we spent at Pao-an. At that time, I was the political instructor of the guards company. Whenever I passed through your cave on my way to check the posts, you always warmly beckoned me and invited me to come in, and most concernedly inquired about the thinking, military and political training and cultural education in the army. You also asked me, "Is there any homesick fighter?" and urged us to do the ideological and educational work among the fighters well. In addition, you inquired about the food situation in the army with concern. Was the food good? How much rice, vegetables, edible oil and salt were consumed each month? You demanded detailed answers about these questions. When the guards were on duty outside your door, you often patted them on the shoulders kindly and inquired about their health. Chairman Mao, you led us in the great revolutionary cause, yet were so concerned about the small things of our daily living. You were really the bosom friend of revolutionary fighters!

Chairman Mao, how can I forget that in 1937, when I, all set to go south to join the New Fourth Army, went to bid farewell to you, you said to me happily: "That's excellent indeed." You also encouraged me with these words: "After you arrive at the south, you must study well and under all circumstances act according to the directives of the Party Central Committee." Citing as example Chang Kuo-t'ao's attempt to split the Party, you exhorted me to firmly remember the historical experience of the two-line struggle within the Party and unite closely round the Party Central Committee. You also asked me, after arriving in the south, to explain more often the Party's policy of the anti-Japanese national united front to the comrades who remained in the south and persevered in struggle. Finally you said to me: "Do your part to promote unity, study well and work well." As we talked, it was getting late, and you asked me to stay for

supper. When I said I couldn't stay any more for there was a send-off party in the unit, you handed me a pear. This pear was brought to you by Comrade Chou En-lai from Sian. The situation was so difficult at that time, how could I take this pear? But you insisted I eat it, and handed me a knife. When I declined, you said you wouldn't take it yourself and would peel it for me. This was no ordinary pear, it was a symbol of the profound revolutionary sentiment of a great leader for an ordinary fighter! That day was the happiest day in my life. Respected and beloved Chairman Mao, I shall always remember your personal care and exhortations. Several decades have elapsed since I left you at Yenan, but I have never forgotten you. When I think of you, I become sharp sighted, infinitely confident and strong. From 1958 to 1962, I had the good fortune of seeing you at two mass meetings. Your lofty image, your magnificent look, made me feel that I couldn't be more lucky. Chairman Mao, Chairman Mao! Every step forward we revolutionary fighters have taken in our growth has been the result of your care and teaching, as we have been nourished by the sunlight, rain and dew of your thought. You were the unforgettable leader of us revolutionary fighters!

Chairman Mao, although you have left us forever, you will live forever in our hearts. We shall never forget your teaching: "Winning the nationwide victory is only the first step in a journey of ten thousand li" and "after the revolution the road will be longer, the work greater and more arduous." We old fighters shall be guards forever loyal to you and perform our duties in such a way as to carry out and defend your revolutionary line. Your radiant thought will always illuminate our path of advance. We will certainly abide by your adjuration: "Act according to the principles laid down." We will unite closely round the Party Central Committee, carry through to the end the struggle to criticize Teng Hsiao-p'ing and repulse the Right deviationist wind to reverse verdicts and, on the journey of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, advance unceasingly in your footprints!

* * *

Without Struggle, There Will Be No Progress

- Study the history of the two-line struggle within the Party

by

Hung Ch'eng (洪 城)

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/, No. 4, August 20, 1976)

Chairman Mao teaches us: "Without struggle, there will be no progress." This is a concise and pithy generalization of the law of social development and likewise serves as a scientific summation of the experience in revolutionary struggles in our Party over the past 55 years.

Marxism holds that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of the universe. Contradiction exists everywhere and at all times. The objective existence of contradiction determines the inevitability of struggle. Only through struggle can the old be replaced by the new, the old make way for the new, or the old weeded out to let the new emerge. "With the old process coming to an end, a new process begins. The new process embodies new contradictions and begins its own development of contradictions." In the course of struggle the natural world changes, human society advances, and the proletarian political party grows in strength.

The history of our Party is a history of struggle. In the past 55 years, we have not only carried out struggles against class and national adversaries at home and abroad, but also conducted struggles against both the "Left" and Right opportunist lines within the Party. Since its inception our Party has undergone ten major line struggles, and is struggling now against Teng Hsiao-p'ing's counter-revolutionary revisionist line. It is exactly through these violent struggles that our Party has attained development, consolidation and maturity and our revolutionary undertaking advanced in triumph.

During the First Revolutionary Civil War period, there was a determined struggle within our Party between the correct line represented by Chairman Mao and Ch'en Tu-hsiu's Right capitulationist line. After the failure of the First Revolutionary Civil War, our Party, led by Chairman Mao, summed up the lessons of defeat and liquidated Ch'en Tu-hsiu's erroneous line. By holding high the banner of armed revolution and starting the prairie fire of using the countryside to surround the cities and capturing political power by armed force, the Party gained considerable progress and the Chinese revolution was revived. In the Second Revolutionary Civil War period, the Marxist-Leninist line represented by Chairman Mao was locked in firm struggle against the erroneous line pursued by Ch'ü Ch'iu-pai, Li Li-san, Lo Chang-lung, and Wang Ming. At the Tsun-i Meeting in particular, our Party firmly rectified the Wang Ming line, established Chairman Mao's leading position in the whole Party and guaranteed the implementation of

Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in the whole Party. We shattered the siege, pursuit, and interception carried out by several hundred thousand reactionary Kuomintang troops, consummated the Long March in triumph, saved the Party and the Red Army and the Chinese revolution at a crucial juncture, and ushered in a new revolutionary phase. Since the Tsun-i Meeting, Chairman Mao continued to lead the whole Party in uncompromising struggle against Chang Kuo-t'ao's Right splittism and Wang Ming's Right capitulationism. Following the 1942 Yenan rectification campaign, which exposed the reactionary essence of successive "Left" and Right opportunist lines, the Marxist-Leninist level of the whole Party was raised and thus was "achieved the objective of uniting the whole Party;" our Party "ideologically, politically and organizationally united unprecedentedly (but not completely) and advanced in big but steady strides." Victory over the erroneous line not only insured that our Party could defeat the ferocious Japanese imperialism but also guaranteed that our Party, after Japan's surrender, could successfully and without entailing any losses switch over to people's revolutionary war against Chiang Kai-shek's counter-revolutionary war, annihilate Chiang Kai-shek's 8 million troops and seize nationwide political power within a short time.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, our Party has successfully carried out struggles against the anti-Party cliques of Kao Kang, Jao Shu-shih and P'eng Te-huai, repulsed one unbridled attack after another by the bourgeoisie, upheld the Party's general line for the transition period, defended the three red banners, and stimulated the development of the cause of socialist revolution and construction in our country. The great proletarian cultural revolution, personally initiated and led by Chairman Mao, smashed the two bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao, criticized their counter-revolutionary revisionist line, and ferreted out the renegades, enemy agents and unrepentant capitalist roaders. The vast numbers of Party members and cadres raised their awareness of class and line struggles and of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our Party became stronger, purer and more vigorous, while our revolutionary undertaking was increasingly on the upsurge. The present drive to criticize Teng Hsiao-p'ing and repulse the Right deviationist wind to reverse verdicts has further consolidated and developed the fruits of the great proletarian cultural revolution, enhanced the consciousness of the vast numbers of Party members in struggling against the capitalist roaders, accumulated rich experience in fighting against the bourgeoisie inside the Party and thus further strengthened Party building.

The history of our Party shows conclusively that "to lead revolution to victory, a political party must rely on the correctness of its political line and the consolidation of its organization." But a correct political line is not something that is dropped from the sky, nor is it engendered naturally and developed peacefully. Rather, it is developed through struggles against the erroneous lines. It is through recurrent struggles, through triumphs and setbacks, comparison and discrimination, that has enabled our Party to put an end to the dominance of the opportunist line and establish the leading position of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line in the whole Party. As a result, the vast numbers of Party members have greatly

raised their awareness of the line struggle, distinguished true from false Marxism and between correct and incorrect lines, unceasingly eliminated the interference and sabotage of the opportunist line, and consciously and firmly carried out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. By the same token, the unity of the proletarian political party is safeguarded by relying on inner-Party struggle under the guidance of the correct line. And it is exactly through recurrent struggles that has enabled our Party to purge the bourgeois careerists, schemers, alien class elements and degenerate elements that have sneaked into the Party, purify the revolutionary ranks and preserve the proletarian vanguard character of our Party. This has made it possible to smash the splittist conspiracies of the chieftains of the opportunist lines, straighten out thinking, educate the comrades, rescue errant cadres and strengthen the revolutionary unity of the whole Party on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung thought.

Lenin said, "Without going through repeated struggles, it will be impossible to form at any time and in any place a truly proletarian and revolutionary social-democratic party." As a result of resolute struggles waged by the Marxist-Leninist line represented by Chairman Mao against succeeding opportunist lines over the past 55 years, our Party has grown from small to big, from weak to strong, from only dozens of Party members and a few communist cells to a great and strong Marxist political party, vigorously leading hundreds of millions of people in winning the victory of the new democratic revolution and the great victories in socialist revolution and construction.

"The socialist revolution is not a single action nor a single battle on a single front but encompasses a whole era permeated with violent class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, that is, on all economic and political problems." Chairman Mao, summing up the rich experience and objective laws of class and line struggles, has many times cautioned us to fully recognize the protracted nature of struggle. In the upsurge of criticizing Teng Hsiao-p'ing and repulsing the Right deviationist wind to reverse verdicts, Chairman Mao once more stressed: "Will there be need for a hundred years from now? A thousand years from now? There will still be need for revolution." Socialist society covers a fairly long historical period and in this period there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle. The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is the principal contradiction in our society. The socialist revolution is aimed at making revolution against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes. The bourgeoisie will not of its own accord withdraw from the historical stage. They are bound to hit back at the proletariat with tenfold frenzy and a hundredfold hatred. What particularly merits our attention is that because of the existence of bourgeois rights and the influence of the international bourgeoisie and revisionism, new bourgeois elements will continuously be engendered in our country, and persons in power taking the capitalist road and the bourgeoisie will still appear in our Party. "The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road" -- a historical phenomenon that will persist for a long period of time. Throughout the historical period of socialism,

therefore, class struggle will not die out but will become most acute and complex.

The bourgeoisie inside the Party is far more deceptive and dangerous than those outside it. Chairman Mao pointed out back in 1964: "The bureaucrat class on the one hand and the working class together with the poor and lower-middle peasants on the other are two classes sharply antagonistic to each other." By the "bureaucrat class" Chairman Mao was referring to the capitalist roaders in the Party. When they become high officials, they do not want to go forward but even move backward and oppose revolution, politically oppressing and economically exploiting the workers and poor and lower-middle peasants and sucking the blood of the laboring people. They are more vicious than the capitalists. With the continuous deepening of the socialist revolution, the bourgeoisie outside the Party in the position of the ruled economically have been deprived of the means of production and politically and ideologically suffered repeated defeats, becoming more and more notorious in society and losing their former appeal. Hence, the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has found more penetrating and striking expression in the Party, with the capitalist roaders inside the Party becoming the nuclear force of the bourgeoisie and commanders of capitalist restoration. This has distinguished them vastly from the chieftains of the opportunist lines during the democratic revolution period, who served as agents of and were subservient to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie inside the Party is the main target of the socialist revolution and our struggle against the capitalist roaders is the two-line struggle within the Party and a life-and-death battle between the two major antagonistic classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. For every step it advances, the socialist revolution is bound to meet with more desperate resistance from the bourgeoisie inside the Party. Since they hold a portion of the powers of the Party and state in their hands, they can set up mountain strongholds, engage in sectarianism, and rig up a bourgeois headquarters, instituting and pushing from the above a counter-revolutionary revisionist line. Politically they are provided with assorted protective coloration and habitually wave a red flag to oppose the red flag, carrying the so-called "true Marxist" banner to oppose Marxism and flaunting the so-called "true socialist" ensign to oppose socialism. They even hoodwink the masses and attack the Party in the name of the Party and the state, defending and extending bourgeois rights, altering the character of socialist ownership and scheming to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat. In practicing capitalist restoration, they are vicious and move fast. During the cooperative transformation of agriculture, Liu Shao-ch'i summarily ordered the slashing of 200,000 cooperatives. Flaunting the ensigns of "holding high" and "following closely," the Lin Piao anti-Party clique vainly attempted to stage a counter-revolutionary coup. Last year Teng Hsiao-p'ing again unfurled the sinister ensign of "taking the three directives as the key link" and engaged in verdict-reversing and restoration activities in a big way, bringing much harm to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat.

The grim reality of class struggle tells us that the proletariat, after its seizure of political power, must not only suppress the resistance of the overthrown landlords and capitalists, but must also struggle with

determination against the bourgeoisie inside the Party. "Can 800 million people manage without struggle?" We must tightly grasp class struggle as the key link, adhere to the Party's basic line, tear off the disguises of the bourgeoisie inside the Party, expose their counter-revolutionary essence, and smash their attempts to usurp Party leadership and state power. We must persist in struggle and use Chairman Mao's revolutionary line to defeat the revisionist line of the capitalist roaders so as to insure that the socialist land of ours will never change its color.

Obliterating contradictions and opposing struggle characterizes all old and new revisionists. The chieftains of the revisionist line inside the Party always do their best to deny class and line struggles. The renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-ch'i preached the "theory of the dying out of class struggle," the "theory of inner-Party peace" and the "theory of docile tools" to negate the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and abolish inner-Party struggle. The bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegade and traitor Lin Piao alleged that "China is free from revisionism," advocating that "when two fight against each other, they are enemies; when they are reconciled they become friends." The arch unrepentant capitalist roader in the Party Teng Hsiao-p'ing has all along opposed class struggle as the key link and publicly declared: "Classes have in the main been abolished and therefore we should no longer emphasize class struggle." He also said: "We had too much dictatorship in the past; it ought to be relaxed a bit in future." After resuming work, he impatiently dished out the revisionist program of "taking the three directives as the key link," alleging that "we should not talk about class struggle every day." He basically denied the existence in socialist society of classes, class contradictions and class struggle, the existence of contradiction and struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In obliterating class contradictions and opposing class struggle, these chieftains of the revisionist line are theoretically downright historical idealists and politically utter reactionaries.

Lenin, in criticizing the opportunists for their fallacy of disavowing class struggle, said: "To forget class struggle is to lean toward capital and the bourgeoisie, to oppose the laborers." The evil purpose of the chieftains of the revisionist line in the Party in obliterating class contradictions and opposing class struggle is to try to benumb the revolutionary fighting will of the proletariat and the laboring people, to abolish the proletariat's class struggle against the bourgeoisie and the proletariat's revolution against and its dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, to alter the Party's character, to stifle the Party's life, to cover up the bourgeois attacks on the proletariat, and to practice restoration and regression. In criticizing Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Chairman Mao, hitting the nail on the head, pointed out: He "himself represents the bourgeoisie, yet says he is not clear about class contradictions." "Liu Shao-ch'i preached the theory of the dying out of class struggle, yet he himself never ceased to wage class struggle, and he wanted to protect his bunch of renegades and sworn followers. Lin Piao wanted to overthrow the proletariat and stage a coup. Has class struggle died out?" Teng Hsiao-

p'ing, inheriting the mantle of Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao, on the one hand preached the "theory of the dying out of class struggle" and on the other whipped up the Right deviationist wind to reverse verdicts. Wielding the big club of "rectification," he wanted to do away with Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and policies, the victorious fruits of the great cultural revolution, and the superiority of the socialist system, and engineered the Tienanmen Square counter-revolutionary riot. He pretended to extinguish class struggle but in reality engaged in reversal of verdicts and restoration, with the intention of toppling our Party and our dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin pointed out: "If a political party wants to survive, it must neither waver in the least on questions of survival nor make any compromise with those who may bury it." Under no circumstances should we believe in the rumors and sophistries of political swindlers like Liu Shao-ch'i, Lin Piao and Teng Hsiao-p'ing and be befuddled by their sleight-of-hand tricks. We must completely unmask them so as to "reveal their ugly colors and expel them." Otherwise, the revolutionary proletariat will win no victory and the tragedy of the rise of revisionism to power and capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union will repeat itself in China.

Contrary to all opportunists, Communists never avoid struggle. Instead, they openly advocate class struggle, regard struggle as the source of greatest happiness, and are full of confidence in winning the struggle. The philosophy of the Communist Party is the philosophy of struggle and as long as there are classes and social contradictions, we shall not stop fighting.

In class society classes and class contradictions exist objectively, and the class and line struggles that reflect these contradictions are independent of man's will. The reactionary classes, driven by their class instinct, invariably seek every opportunity to attack the proletariat. And as people cannot avoid struggle even if they want to, they can only carry it out with determination and win the victory. The Party organization is the vigorous vanguard leading the proletariat and the revolutionary masses in fighting against class enemies, and Communists just want to wage class struggle. Any notion of evading or becoming weary of struggle is wrong, not befitting a true Marxist. We should regard struggle as the sacred duty and lofty mission of the proletarian revolutionary. Engels said: "When, like Marx and myself, one has fought harder all one's life long against the alleged socialists than against anyone else (for we only regarded the bourgeoisie as a class and hardly ever involved ourselves in conflicts with individual bourgeois), one cannot greatly grieve that the inevitable struggle has broken out." Lenin also said: "This is my destiny. Continuous struggle -- opposing assorted foolish ideas and vulgar views in politics and opposing opportunism, etc." The great leader Chairman Mao has led our Party for more than half a century in struggle against class enemies at home and abroad, national enemies and "Left" and Right opportunists within the Party, setting a brilliant example in persisting in struggle and continuing the revolution. We must carry forward the

Party's glorious tradition of persisting in struggle and learn from the thoroughgoing revolutionary spirit of the revolutionary teachers of the proletariat. Like them, we must make no compromise with the opportunists and revisionists. Instead of bargaining away principles, we must dare to struggle, dare to win victories, and dare to struggle against reactionary trends. We must resolutely uphold and defend revolutionary truth, establish the thinking of carrying on a protracted war and always stand in the van of class and line struggles.

Proletarians have firm faith in revolutionary dialectics and in "the new replacing the old as the universally irresistible law of the universe for all times." Therefore, they are able to keep their vigorous revolutionary fighting will and press ahead in the face of violent storms without turning back midway. No enemy or hardship can deter us from advancing. No matter how many setbacks and reversals may appear in revolutionary struggle, the future of the world will surely belong to the fighting proletarians. "This Party of ours has a bright future." We have the leadership of the great leader Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee headed by him, the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line in charting the course, and the vast numbers of Party members who persist in continuing the revolution and opposing restoration and regression. Whatever struggle may occur, it cannot change the law of history, and the Chinese and world revolutions eventually will triumph.

Whether or not we can face struggle squarely and persist in it is, in the final analysis, a question of stand and world outlook. The proletariat is the greatest revolutionary class in the history of mankind, it is revolutionary in the most thoroughgoing way. The proletariat's class status determines that only by liberating all mankind can the proletariat itself be finally emancipated. In the course of struggle, the proletariat will lose only its chains but have the whole world to gain. In China, "after the democratic revolution, the workers and the poor and lower-middle peasants did not stop, they want revolution." They do not like the revisionist bigshots to repress them. They are firmly against the capitalist roaders oppressing and exploiting them and insist on making revolution against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie inside the Party. All revolutionary comrades and particularly leading cadres should firmly identify themselves with the workers, peasants and soldiers, going deep among them, eating, living and laboring with and sincerely learning from them, and assiduously studying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, striving to transform their world outlook, consciously restricting bourgeois rights, and becoming vanguard fighters persisting in struggle and continuing the revolution.

In 1962 great leader Chairman Mao pointed out with farsighted vision: "Fifty to 100 years from now is a great era of complete changes in the social system of the world, an earth-shaking epoch without parallel in any historical period of the past. Living in such an era, we must be prepared to carry out great struggles different in many ways from struggles

waged previously." We must follow the orientation charted by Chairman Mao, bear closely in mind the Party's basic program, adhere to the Party's basic line, grasp class struggle as the key link, deepen the criticism of Teng Hsiao-p'ing and repulse the Right deviationist wind to reverse verdicts. We must use Marxism to defeat revisionism and socialism to conquer capitalism, and carry through to the end both the struggle against the bourgeoisie, particularly the bourgeoisie inside the Party, and the continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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Debate Over Shang Yang Reform Between Two Schools in Succeeding Dynasties

by

Hung Shan-ssu (洪善思)

(Li-shih Yen-chiu /Historical Research/, No. 3, June 23, 1976)

(I)

Although Shang Yang was active in introducing political reform in Ch'in for only ten to 20 years three centuries before Christ, the controversy over the Shang Yang reform lasted as long as one to two thousand years.

The Shang Yang reform was a penetrating social upheaval in the transition from the slave to the feudal system in ancient China. It destroyed the decadent slave system, pounded at the restorationist forces of the slave-owners, curbed the slave-owner's reactionary privileges, and stimulated the development of the new feudal system and social productive forces, thereby bringing about an immense and far-reaching impact in history. Unreconciled to their setbacks, a handful of slave-owners directing the restorationist forces at the time repeatedly carried out verdict-reversing and restoration activities. The reactionary Confucian Chao Liang defiantly called on Shang Yang with the intention of settling account with and reversing the decisions of his reform movement. Lamenting that the present was not as good as the past and flaunting the ensign of "pleading for the people," he followed Confucius' practice and viciously attacked the reform as "relying on force" instead of "virtue." He also employed the carrot and stick approach in an attempt to force Shang Yang to abandon his reform and surrender power. His reactionary stance was blatant to the extreme. Shang Yang "refused"* and resolutely resisted this gust of verdict-reversing wind. When Duke Hsiao of Ch'in, an advocate of reform, died, the crown prince Szu (King Hui Wen of Ch'in) assumed the reins of government. Once again Lord Chien and his restorationists who had suffered blows in the reform movement began to carry out verdict-reversing and restoration activities. They spread rumors and accused Shang Yang of "rebellion." This eventually resulted in the brutal slaying of Shang Yang, who was "torn apart by horses."** However, the restoration attempt was abortive for although Shang Yang was dead the "Ch'in laws were not defeated."*** "The people in the state of Ch'in abided by law and order and some families kept the

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* "Biography of Lord Shang, Historical Records."

** Ibid.

*** "Legislation, Han Fei Tzu."

legal documents of Kuan Chung and Shang Yang."* Even the women and children in that state spoke approvingly of "Lord Shang's laws."** No force could block the state of Ch'in from advancing along Shang Yang's Legalist line. In order to push the reformist line of the landlord class, Han Fei in his works devoted considerable space to enumerating Shang Yang's contributions and praising him as a "loyal minister" of "enduring fame."*** He described Shang Yang's "reform as effective in changing prevailing practices and wisely dispensing justice,"+ "generously rewarding those who deserve it and severely punishing those who ask for it."++ He fully affirmed the reform line and reform measures that called for "burning of seditious poems and books and publicizing the laws and decrees."+++ He held that "Duke Hsiao put it into practice with the object of sustaining the reigning monarch and making the state prosperous and strong."# After Ch'in Shih Huang unified the six states, he continued to carry out the reform, developed the fruit of Shang Yang's reform, and won still greater victories in the struggle against restoration.

Following the establishment of the feudal system, the debate between the Confucian and Legalist schools over the Shang Yang reform took on a new class content. During the Western Han period, the reactionary Confucian Tung Chung-shu spoke for the conservative faction of the landlord class. He viciously attacked Shang Yang and alleged that Ch'in "used the Shang Yang reform to change the monarchical system"## and the "pursuit of excessive expansion" finally led to its collapse. He suggested to Emperor Wu that he "ostracize all other schools of thought and honor Confucianism alone," abandon the Legalist line and restore the old order according to Confucian ideals. While Han Emperor Wu "outwardly was in favor of Confucianism," he appointed Legalists like Sang Hung-yang to high posts and in fact continued to pursue the Legalist line. Not long afterward, conservative-minded Confucian devotees and worthy scholars attempted to alter Emperor Wu's Legalist line. At the Salt and Iron Conference, they reviled Shang Yang and blamed him for "laying the foundation of

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* "Five Vermin, Han Fei Tzu."

** "Stratagem of Ch'in, I, Stratagems of Warring States."

*** "Treachery, Robbery and Slaying of Officials, Han Fei Tzu."

\+ Ibid.

++ "Legislation, Han Fei Tzu."

+++ "Mr. Ho, Han Fei Tzu."

\# Ibid.

"Treatise of Agriculture, Book of Han."

Ch'in with heavy penalties and harsh laws with the result that it fell with the second emperor."* They also alleged that "not to follow the examples of the early kings is not to uphold the teachings of the sages,"** pointing out that this would "bring danger to the soverign and ruin to oneself."*** In openly attacking Shang Yang, they were in fact alluding to the current state of affairs. Sang Hung-yang, however, proceeded from the clear-cut Legalist point of view in highly assessing Shang Yang's merits. He praised Shang Yang for his "wise reforms which gave the Ch'in subjects a very stable government,"+ the introduction of "a severe penal code" that "denied evil-doers of their hiding places."+ "After employing Lord Shang, Ch'in prospered and achieved a unified empire with the annexation of the six states."+ "His outstanding merits made him famous in later generations."+ The collapse of the Second Emperor of Ch'in was due to "misrule of treacherous ministers" such as Chao Kao who usurped power and altered Ch'in Shih Huang's Legalist line. "To blame Shang Yang for the fall of Ch'in which was actually brought about by Chao Kao"+ was to reverse history. This forcefully refuted the Confucians' shameless slander against Shang Yang, defended Emperor Wu's Legalist line and stemmed the adverse tide of restoration and regression.

With the gradual transformation of the landlord class from a revolutionary class into a conservative and reactionary class after Western Han, the conservative faction of the landlord class became more and more vehement in attacking Shang Yang. To oppose the reforms introduced by Wang An-shih, the diehards of the big landlord class in the Northern Sung period became even more unbridled in attacking the Shang Yang reform. In his memorial to the throne attacking the Shang Yang reform, Ssuma Kuang, chief of the diehard faction, said that the reform was "resented by the people," and described it as "reprehensible deviation from customary practices inconsistent with prevailing sentiment,"++ a reactionary theory that had been criticized by Shang Yang long ago, to attack by insinuation Wang An-shih's reforms as inhuman. Shao Yung, a lackey of the Ssuma Kuang clique, also penned verses to curse Shang Yang for "destroying righteousness and benevolence, and his reform caused his death."+++ Su Shih likened Shang Yang to "a fly in the cesspool"

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* "Putting the Blame on Shang Yang, On Salt and Iron."

** "Following the Way, On Salt and Iron."

*** "Chou Ch'in, On Salt and Iron."

\+ "Putting the Blame on Shang Yang, On Salt and Iron."

++ Collected Essays of Lord Ssuma, Vol. XXII, "Memorial on Customs and Habits."

+++ Collection of Satirical Poems, Vol. XIII, "Verses on Words and Deeds."

and said "I disdain to speak or write about him." He belived that whoever used such a man to carry out reform would "destroy the state and plunge the people into misery."* He made this remark to give vent to his bitter hatred for Wang An-shih's reforms. People like Fan Ch'un-jen even went so far as to attack Wang An-shih by name, alleging that "he was as ruthless as Shang Yang in enforcing the laws and turned against Mencius in seeking material gains."** In the face of such anti-reform clamors raised by the diehards, Wang An-shih displayed the fighting spirit of "not fearing the portents of heaven, not following ancestral examples, and not taking gossips seriously."*** HIs militant poem asserting that "nobody in this age should deprecate Shang Yang for his reforms did bring about effective rule"+ was an answer to the abuse hurled at Shang Yang by the diehards. By fully affirming Shang Yang's Legalist line and innovative spirit, he expressed his determination to enforce new laws and fight against the diehards. With the steady decline of the decadent landlord class in the later stages of the feudal society, they opposed any change and regarded the Legalist philosophy in favor of reform as pestilence. Instead, they looked upon the reactionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius as their life-saving straw. Since Chu Hsi, reactionary rationalist of Southern Sung who regarded himself as a Confucian authority, viciously defined the Shang Yang reform as "the path to national and self-destruction,"++ Wang Yang-ming and other reactionaries had agitated and hurled the most damning invectives at Shang Yang. But progressive thinkers such as Li Chih struck out from a different direction, discarded the Confucian trash, and ardently praised Shang Yang as "a brave man" who "achieved huge successes"# in history. Li Chih identified the Shang Yang reform with "the consummation of the Ch'in empire. Although he was killed, his laws continued to be adopted."##

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* Collected Works of Su Tung-po -- Last Collection, Vol. XI, "Chih Lin."

** Chronicle of Events in the History of Sung, Vol. XXXVII, "Wang An-shih's Reform."

*** "Biography of Wang An-shih, History of Sung."

\+ Collected Works of Wang An-shih, Vol. XXXII, "Shang Yang."

++ Complete Works of Chu Hsi, Vol. LXIII, "The Way to Order, I."

\# Burned Books, Vol. V. Comments on Outline History, Vol. III, "Chronicle of Chou: King Hsien."

"Collected Literary Essays of Li Chih: Preface to Criticism of Selected Essays of Mo Tzu."

As a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society in modern times, did China need political changes? Reformism or revolution? An acute struggle ensued over these pressing issues. Hence the controversy over the Shang Yang reform which had lasted for more than two thousand years reached another climax under new historical conditions. To oppose the 1898 Reform Movement, Chang Chih-tung, a diehard of the feudal comprador class, charged that "Shang Yang's reform led to abandonment of filial piety, brotherhood, benevolence and righteousness. Ch'in became powerful for a while and then collapsed."* He vigorously preached the theory that reform caused national subjugation. On the other hand, the reformists led by K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, while agitating for reform, nevertheless clung to the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, doing their utmost to attack "Lord Shang's reform for its brutality."** They accused Shang Yang's measure for "eliminating the six fleas" of "coping with the symptoms instead of dealing with the trouble at the source."*** Advocating "civil rights," they said nonsensically that Confucius and Mencius were in favor of "civil rights." They blamed Shang Yang and other Legalists for "depriving the people of their rights and encouraging the monarch to do as he pleased."+ This exhibition of apprehension showed that these timid reformists never wished nor dared to touch the feudal system. Chang T'ai-yen, a bourgeois revolutionary, in one of his early articles "Shang Yang" began by pointing out angrily: "The slander against Shang Yang has lasted for two thousand years but never as vehement as it is now."++ He warmly praised Shang Yang's historical accomplishments and severely lashed out at the reactionaries in succeeding generations for hurling invectives at Shang Yang. Moreover, he forcefully exposed the reactionary features of the reformists in revering Confucianism and opposing the Legalist school, pointing out that reactionary theories under the feudal system of "pampering the sovereign and repressing the people" did not begin with the attack on Shang Yang. On the contrary, he argued, they had been consistently advanced by the Confucians, as was true of Tung Chung-shu, a big Confucian in the Western Han period. Comparing Shang Yang with people like Tung Chung-shu, the difference may be likened to that "between a big rock and a small ditch." He also pointed out: it was absolutely necessary for Shang Yang and Ch'in Shih Huang to burn the Confucian classics because

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* Complete Works of Lord Chang Wen-hsiang, Vol. 203, "Persuasion on Learning," Part II.

** Inquiry into New Learning and False Classics, Vol. VII.

*** China's Six Great Statesmen, Chapter I, "Kuan Tzu."

\+ Collected Works of Chang T'ai-yen, "Review of the Past," Vol. IX, "Shang Yang."

++ Ibid.

"without burning the Six Arts there is no way to show respect to the new king."* He further pointed out that Legalist theory and practice were attuned to the demands of historical development. "People of later generations only took account of the harshness of Shang Yang's early administration without taking note of its achievements."** Chang T'ai-yen's comments on Shang Yang forcefully rebutted the reactionary trends of thought of revering Confucianism and opposing Legalism and created significant public opinion for the bourgeois democratic revolution.

After reviewing the history of the series of struggles between the attempt to reverse verdicts and the effort to thwart it revolving around the Shang Yang reform, we can clearly see that this question is no "purely academic" discussion as frequently publicized by the bourgeoisie. It has all along closely related to the struggle between the two political lines at the time, between revolution and restoration and between going forward and moving backward. As Lu Hsün rightly said: "Defending the ancients is defending oneself."*** Whether to affirm or negate Shang Yang is invariably determined by the class status of definite classes or political groups; it is also geared to the political lines of definite classes or political groups. Moreover, the outcome of the debate is not determined by the abuses and sophistries of the reactionaries and Confucians, but by the just adjudication of the objective laws of history. "Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization for thousands of years." Didn't the attempts of the reactionaries and Confucians in succeeding generations to reverse the verdict on Shang Yang's reform go bankrupt in the wake of their restoration and regressive actions?

(II)

Over the past two thousand years the controversy of the two schools over the question of the Shang Yang reform has mainly focused on the issue of whether or not to introduce reforms, whether or not to suppress the reactionary elements, and whether or not to criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

Ever since Tung Chung-shu of Western Han wantonly attacked Shang Yang for "changing the imperial system," reactionaries and Confucians in succeeding generations have, without exception, availed themselves of this charge to hurl invectives at Shang Yang including such absurd arguments as that the reform ruined Ch'in and life was worse after than before. However, reformers and Legalists like Sang Hung-yang regarded the Shang Yang reform

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* Collected Works of Chang T'ai-yen, Documentation I, "Notes on Ch'in's Contributions."

** Collected Works of Chang T'ai-yen, "Review of the Past," Vol. IX, "Shang Yang."

*** Lu Hsün, "Canopy: The Idea Hits Me All of a Sudden."

as exemplary on the ground that his reforms "brought good government to Ch'in." The question of praising or damning the reform is in essence one of accepting or rejecting reform and of how to view the issue of reform. In class society "system" refers to the political and economic system of definite classes. Slave society and feudal society had their own systems. But systems changed. Beginning with the last years of the Spring and Autumn period, the development of social productive forces and class struggle waged by the masses of people made the supersession of the slave system by the feudal system inevitable. Shang Yang's historical contribution lay in the introduction of reforms that hastened the collapse of the slave system and the establishment of the feudal system. As Chairman Mao has often said: "There is no construction without destruction. Destruction means criticism, it means revolution." "Only by destroying the old and decadent things can new and healthy things be established." The Shang Yang reform "changed the system," that is, the old slave system, a change that embodied his revolutionary spirit of destroying the old and establishing the new. All reactionaries or conservatives, in order to uphold the old system, invariably took the stand of the reactionary classes or reactionary forces. Since they viewed the Shang Yang reform in terms of the reactionary world outlook based on the idealist and metaphysical concept of "Heaven changeth not so the Tao / Way / changeth not," naturally they regarded "change of the system" by Shang Yang as nothing less than a towering crime. All revolutionaries or reformers who were opposed to the old system and wanted to establish the new system took the stand of the revolutionary class or progressive forces and examined the Shang Yang reform from the viewpoint of historical development. They were bound to applaud Shang Yang as an "enlightened reformer." This shows that whether or not reform is desired and how to view it serves as an important hallmark distinguishing revolutionaries from reactionaries, reformers from conservatives.

Reactionaries and Confucians in succeeding generations, without exception, attacked Shang Yang for his "severe penal code and harsh laws," for "relying on force" instead of "relying on virtue." Reformers and Legalists, however, affirmed Shang Yang's "severe penal code," which made it impossible for "the treacherous and hypocritical to hide themselves." The Shang Yang reform was a social upheaval, its spearhead aimed mainly at slave-owning nobles. Whether or not a "severe penal code and harsh laws" should be instituted against slave-owning nobles and restorationist forces boils down to the question of whether or not revolutionary violence should be applied in putting down counter-revolutionary violence, and whether or not dictatorship should be exercised over reactionary classes or reactionary forces. Marxists attach considerable importance to the role of revolutionary violence and have all along maintained the use of revolutionary violence to smash counter-revolutionary violence. "History shows that there has never been an oppressed class which succeeded in gaining the right to rule without going through a period of dictatorship, that is, seizing political power and using force to suppress the fiercest and the most frenzied and ruthless resistance of the exploiters." In the last analysis, the Shang Yang reform was aimed at using the landlord class dictatorship to replace slave-owning class dictatorship and was a

life-and-death battle waged by the newly emerging landlord class against the declining slave-owning class. If the newly rising landlord class failed to use violent means to put down the rabid resistance of the restorationist forces of the slave-owners, no reform measures could be carried out successfully and no dictatorship of the landlord class could be consolidated. In the course of introducing reforms, Shang Yang was determined to suppress the restorationist forces of the slave-owners. Because of this, the slave-owning nobles at the time "bitterly resented the Shang Yang reform more than their private foes."* More than a thousand years later, during the Southern Sung period, when Chu Hsi's son-in-law,Huang Chen, read Book of Lord Shang, he cried out in alarm: "Reading the chronicle a thousand years later, I am still filled with apprehension, let alone those who suffered suppression at that time!"** Reactionaries and Confucians over the ages so bitterly hated Shang Yang for his suppression of counter-revolution not because they were opposed to violence and dictatorship per se, and they spoke approvingly of Confucius' execution of Shao Cheng Mao and lauded the hangmen who slaughtered peasants in revolt in their times. This indicates that they were not opposed to violence and dictatorship as such. What they wanted was counter-revolutionary violence and dictatorship and what they opposed was revolutionary violence and dictatorship.

Whether or not to criticize Confucius, to oppose or revere him, is another question of vital importance in the debate over the Shang Yang reform between reactionaries and reformers, between Confucians and Legalists in succeeding generations. Chairman Mao points out: "To overthrow a political power, it is always necessary first of all to create public opinion, to do work in the ideological sphere. This is true for the revolutionary class as well as for the counter-revolutionary class." Such is an objective law of class struggle. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the Confucians represented by Confucius and Mencius were political representatives of the declining slave-owning class. In order to uphold and restore the slave system, they campaigned everywhere to create counter-revolutionary public opinion and preach the reactionary line of restoring the old order, stirring up the verdict-reversing wind and vindictively counter-attacking the newly rising landlord class. If the Legalists as political representatives of the newly rising landlord class failed to grasp class struggle in the ideological sphere and criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, if they failed to use revolutionary public opinion to crush counter-revolutionary public opinion, undoubtedly reform measures introduced could not be implemented to the extent of consolidating the dictatorship of the landlord class. In the course of effecting the reforms, Shang Yang was firm in repudiating and struggling against Confucian ideas. Not only did he refute the Confucians' slander against the Legalists and penetratingly expose the hypocrisy and decadence

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* "Putting the Blame on Shang Yang, On Salt and Iron."

** Mr. Huang's Diaries, Vol. 55, "Reading the Scholars."

of Confucian ideology, but in practice implemented the policy of "burning books of poetry and clarifying the laws" and exercised landlord class dictatorship over the Confucians and their reactionary thinking. In his treatises on the Shang Yang reform, Han Fei, a staunch opponent of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, was particularly firm in affirming this. In the same vein, Chang T'ai-yen, with the historical outlook of a bourgeois revolutionary, highly appraised Shang Yang for his anti-Confucius struggle. On the contrary, reactionaries and Confucians in succeedng generations regarded Shang Yang's anti-Confucianism as a crime in "opposing the way of the sages." They lamented "the loss of respect for the superior" and denounced Shang Yang vehemently by saying that "tearing apart his body by horses is not enough to redeem his guilt."* This shows that opposing or revering Confucius has been an acute class struggle in the ideological sphere between the reformers and the reactionaries and between the Legalists and Confucians in succeeding generations, preparing public opinion for or against reversal of verdicts, for or against restoration.

"The end of the battle is not in sight, and the old tactics will be continuously followed." The struggle revolving around the Shang Yang reform in history -- between the attempt to reverse the verdict and the effort to defeat it -- was by no means accidental; it was bound to occur. It shows that after each major social upheaval, there will always be representatives of declining classes to spring out to reverse verdicts, and the revolutionary class or reformers invariably will have to carry out the struggle against the reversal of verdicts in order to defend and develop the gains of reform. Such struggle breaks out not just once or twice, three or four times, but many times. Particularly at a new historical stage, a time of fierce struggle between the two political lines, between revolution and restoration and between going forward and moving backward, there often will be reversals. In short, as long as class struggle exists, the struggle between reversal of verdicts and counter-reversal of verdicts, between restoration and counter-restoration, will not cease. Shang Yang's reform and his assumption of the reins of government lasted only a little over 20 years, yet the controversy over this reform has been going on for more than two thousand years. The great proletarian cultural revolution launched in our country has been a great political revolution, being of immense immediate and far-reaching historical significance to combating and preventing revisionism and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. When classes and class struggle exist in society and when "the capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road," it is not surprising that the bourgeoisie and all other enemies should bitterly hate the great cultural revolution and want to reverse its decisions. They do so with ulterior motives. The Soviet revisionists and Lin Piao hate the great cultural revolution for the purpose of restoring the old order. The same is true of the arch unrepentant capitalist roader in the Party Teng

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* Notes on Reading Books in the Eastern Study, Vol. XII, "Scholars."

Hsiao-p'ing, who stirred up the Right deviationist wind to reverse verdicts against the great cultural revolution. Where there is reversal of verdicts, there is bound to be an effort to counter it. "Reversing verdicts goes against the will of the people." Led by the great leader Chairman Mao, the proletariat and the revolutionary people are determined to repulse the Right deviationist wind to reverse verdicts and will never permit the restoration of capitalism in China. In drawing lessons from history and summing up the experience in class struggle, present and past, we must persist in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, make long-term ideological preparations for carrying out the struggle against restoration, and defend and develop with practical revolutionary action the victorious fruits of the great proletarian cultural revolution. We must persist in criticizing Confucius and use revolutionary public opinion to crush counter-revolutionary public opinion. We must uphold revolutionary violence and use it to smash counter-revolutionary violence so as to continuously consolidate and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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Two-Line Struggle in Li Tzu-ch'eng's Insurgent Army in Late Ming

by

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In the last years of the Ming Dynasty, the vast numbers of peasants, exploited economically and oppressed politically under feudalism, lived in deep misery. Peasants in north Shensi were the first to start an uprising. From the seventh year of T'ien Ch'i (1627) to the first year of Ch'ung Chen, Wang Erh, Wang Chia-yin, Kao Ying-hsiang and Li Tzu-ch'eng successively led in uprisings. General uprisings thus erupted at the end of the Ming period.

Within the ranks of the peasant insurgents there existed throughout opposition and struggle between the line upholding peasant uprisings and the capitulationist line. This was determined by the principal contradiction in feudal society, the contradiction between the peasantry and the landlord class, a reflection in the peasant force of the struggle between the peasantry and the landlord class. The waxing and waning of the line struggle, complicated and intricate as it was, in the Li Tzu-ch'eng insurgent army at the end of Ming left beneficial experience and lessons in the history of peasant revolutionary wars in China's feudal society.

I

Following the eruption of general peasant uprisings in late Ming, the government at the time was politically disturbed by the sustained and ruthless partisan strife within the ruling class, and the feudal rule became darker and more decadent. Militarily, the protracted war against the Manchu nobles in Northeast China continued to drain the Ming government of its manpower, financial and material resources and tie down large numbers of its troops. Financially, the coffer of the state was depleted by increased military spending. All these plunged the feudal rule at the end of Ming into a grave crisis. The eruption of the peasant war thus further placed the Ming government in the difficult position of having to fight on two fronts -- against the Manchu nobles and the peasant army.

In these circumstances, the Ming rulers, denied sufficient troops and supplies, lacked the means to fight on two fronts. When the peasant army first struck, Emperor Ch'ung Chen decreed the use of the counter-revolutionary double-dealing strategy of combining suppression with enlistment. This tactic was in fact aimed at putting down the peasant revolution as rapidly as possible through the use of deceptive means such as offers of enlistment. Chairman Mao points out: "In dealing with the

people's democratic forces, the reactionary forces follow the principle of crushing them if they can and of preparing to do so in the future if they can't for the time being." The enlistment approach is a continuation and supplement of the counter-revolutionary policy of armed encirclement and suppression. By granting small favors toward the relief of the hungry, the Ming rulers vainly tried to prevent them from taking part in the uprising. Amnesty was announced to lure the peasant insurgents into leaving the revolutionary contingent. Appointments and emoluments were offered to leaders and generals in the insurgent force who defected, while officers and men of the insurgent force who refused to submit were secretly murdered in the name of "enlistment." All these are illustrative of the counter-revolutionary substance of the feudal rulers' policy of amnesty and enlistment, aimed at disintegrating and putting down peasant uprisings.

In face of the Ming government's policy of "enlistment," whether to uphold peasant uprisings and persist in the struggle against the enemy or to submit to the feudal rulers' military pressure or political inducements and so become defectors and willingly serve as lackeys of the landlord class -- this was a concrete manifestation of the two-line struggle within the peasant contingent at the early stages of the uprising. In face of the enemy's counter-revolutionary double-dealing strategy of "combining suppression with enlistment," Li Tzu-ch'eng, who upheld the line of the peasant insurgents, remained unyielding, succumbing to neither of these two tactics. Fighting bravely and indefatigably with Wang Erh, Wang Chia-yin and Kao Ying-hsiang, he frustrated the enemy's suppression and enlistment attempts and enabled the insurgent army to grow steadily in strength. Sweeping southward through Honan, Hunan and neighboring provinces, they gradually formed 72 battalions under 13 separate commands. By the eighth year of Ch'ung Chen (1635), the revolutionary torch kept burning from the Yellow River basin to the vast plain north of the Yangtze River.

At this juncture the Ming government did everything possible to raise more troops and gather more supplies for fresh encirclement and suppression drives, vainly trying to corner the peasant army within the borders of Honan within half a year. Faced with this grave situation arising from counter-revolutionary encirclement and suppression, the leaders of the combined peasant armies met in Yingyang, Honan, in the first month of the eighth year of Ch'ung Chen to discuss combat operations against the enemy. At the meeting some suggested crossing the Yellow River to the north in order to run away from the enemy's encirclement and suppression operations. Holding aloft the anti-feudal revolutionary banner, Li Tzu-ch'eng was critical of the escapist and panicky moods of running away from the enemy to avoid combat, and instead proposed the correct strategy of diversifying the troops in pre-determined directions, thereby smashing the enemy's counter-revolutionary scheme of encirclement and suppression. When Kao Ying-hsiang died a martyr in the ninth year of Ch'ung Chen (1636), the peasant army elected LI Tzu-ch'eng to be their new chief leader to carry on the fighting.

Despite the enforcement of Ch'ung Chen's counter-revolutionary strategy of combining suppression with enlistment, sometimes with "emphasis on enlistment," for ten years, the revolution flourished, showing the futility of this strategy. Those who enforced this strategy, such as Yang Ho, governor of the three border regions, and Ch'en Ch'i-yü, governor of five provinces, were successively banished on charges of "favoring appeasement to the detriment of the state" and "appeasing the brigands and endangering the frontiers." To get out of the plight of having to fight on two fronts, Ch'ung Chen himself and Yang Szu-ch'ang, Minister of War, secretly dispatched emissaries to collude with the Manchu nobles. They were ready to fill the role of capitulationists in the internal national struggle in order to muster the troops to suppress the peasant insurgent army. But after a stormy debate, the Ming government did not dare to go against the popular will, nor was it in a position to fight on two fronts. Therefore, people like Hsiung Wen-ts'an and Yang Szu-ch'ang who took over the responsibility of putting down peasant uprisings after Ch'en Ch'i-yü, had no choice but to carry on the bankrupt strategy of "appeasement."

This strategy, while it failed to stop the rapid advance of peasant revolution, did produce some effect on a number of wavering and alien class elements within the peasant army. In the 11th year of Ch'ung Chen (1638), Liu Kuo-neng, "who was the first to accept the offer of enlistment at Suichou," was a striking representative of the capitulationists.

Liu Kuo-neng was a graduate of the first degree. He rose with Li Tzu-ch'eng and others in Shensi in the first year of Ch'ung Chen and became one of the leaders of the peasant army. However, his landlord class stand did not change. He faithfully followed the reactionary Confucian preachings of "loyalty" and "filial peity." Accepting the offer of enlistment, he knelt before Hsiung Wen-ts'an, describing his joining the insurgents as "an act of disloyalty" and his later capitulation as "an act to redeem himself." He vowed to "repay" the feudal emperor with "his life."* Later he "won merits in suppression expeditions" and did his very best in the suppression of peasant uprisings. Others like Li Wan-ch'ing also defected and surrendered, becoming falcons of the feudal ruling class.

However, the wave of defection and capitulation was merely an adverse wave in the course of the peasant uprisings, denied the support of the peasant masses. When Liu Kuo-neng and Li Wan-ch'ing defected, most of their followers "dispersed" or "most went over" to other peasant forces."**

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* History of Ming, Vol. 269. "Biography of Liu Kuo-neng"; Records of Roving Bandits in Huailing, Vol. XI, first month of 11th year of Ch'ung Chen, and Vol. XIV, tenth month of 14th year of Ch'ung Chen.

** Records of Roving Bandits in Huailing, Vol. XI, first month of 11th year of Ch'ung Chen; Records of Suppressing Bandits, Vol. III, fourth month of 12th year of Ch'ung Chen.

In representing the aspirations of the peasant class, adhering to the line of the peasant uprising and opposing the adverse current of capitulation and defection, Li Tzu-ch'eng was representative of the real heroes of the peasant revolution. At Kuoch'eng and then Chünchou, he twice refused offers by waverers or renegades. Fighting tenaciously in the hills and jungles, he guarded against hidden traitors and insidious attempts on his life and frustrated the Ming court's "suppression to bring about real surrender" intrigues."* When he was trapped in a mountainous region, he encouraged his men to remain firm, regroup and prepare for new combat. In the 13th year of Ch'ung Chen (1640), the Ming General Yang Szu-ch'ang led his troops to I-ch'ang, Hupeh, and issued "a declaration" inviting Li Tzu-ch'eng to surrender. Li in "defiant language"** resolutely exposed and refuted him. After entering Honan, he took Yeh county, attacked Hsiang-ch'eng and executed Liu Kuo-neng and Li Wan-ch'ing, renegades who held the city for the enemy. Marching toward Hunan and neighboring provinces, he launched four successive assaults on Hsünyang, Hupeh, which was defended by the renegade Wang Kuang-en in a demonstration of his utter hatred for renegades. As the peasant army led by Li Tzu-ch'eng smashed the enemy's strategy of "combining suppression with enlistment," it increasingly grew in strength in the struggle against the adverse current of capitulation and defection, thereby pushing the peasant revolution forward. The decapitation of Hsiung Wen-ts'an in Hsishih and the suicide of Yang Szu-ch'ang for fear of punishment marked the total bankruptcy of the Ming court's "enlistment" strategy.

In the winter of the 13th year of Ch'ung Chen, taking advantage of Chang Hsien-chung's operations in Szechwan that tied down the main force of the Ming troops, the famine in Honan for years on end and the unprecedented intensification of class contradictions, Li Tzu-ch'eng promptly struck out from the jungles at the head of over 50 horsemen in Honan and headed for the east. With the sharpening of class contradictions at the time in mind, Li produced a clear-cut political struggle program centering around "equal distribution of land and exemption of grain levies." "The idea of equality is the most revolutionary idea in the peasant movement."+ Equal division of land was a reflection of the peasant's idea of equality on the land question. The feudal system of land ownership was the basis of landlord power. "Whoever owns the land has access to power and influence."++ The "equal division of land," therefore, reflected in a concentrated way the

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* Inner-Circles Files of Ming, No. 145.

** History of Ming, Vol. 309, "Biography of Li Tzu-ch'eng."

\+ "Strengths and Weaknesses of Russian Revolution," Complete Works of Lenin, Vol. XII, p. 341.

++ "To the Rural Poor," Selected Works of Lenin, Vol. I, 2nd ed., p. 399.

peasant's revolutionary demands for the elimination of the feudal system of land ownership and landlord power. "Taxation is the economic embodiment of the existence of the state," and "the imposition of taxes is the economic basis of the government machinery."* "Exemption from taxation" which is directly against the feudal state expresses the peasantry's revolutionary desire to topple the feudal regime. The militant program of "equal division of land and exemption from grain levies" thus aimed the spearhead directly at the feudal system of land ownership and the landlord regime; it greatly enriched and developed the revolutionary line of peasant uprisings and inspired the anti-feudal revolutionary fighting will of the peasant masses.

Rallying round the banner of "equal division of land and exemption from grain levies," the vast numbers of peasants were further mobilized and set in motion. Tens of thousands of hungry people and other contingents of insurgents flocked to Li Tzu-ch'eng's insurgent army. After the short span of one year, Li's army swelled from the original 50-odd horsemen to well over a million strong and this heralded a new upsurge in the extensive development and struggle of the peasant army.

The rapid development of Li Tzu-ch'eng's insurgent army in Honan shook the Ming court. This prompted the Ming government to readjust its strategy of dealing with the peasant revolution. After the policy of combining suppression and appeasement with emphasis on appeasement failed again and again, they turned to a strategy laying stress on suppression, in a vain attempt to turn the tide through bloody slaughter. Consequently, the Ming government transferred its main force to Honan to cope with the rapidly expanding insurgent army led by Li Tzu-ch'eng. To get out of the predicament of having to fight on two fronts, Emperor Ch'ung Chen once again secretly instructed his Minister of War, Ch'en Hsin-chia, to "dispatch an emissary to negotiate peace with the Great Ch'ing."** However, the scheme fell through due to premature disclosure.

In the 14th and 15th year of Ch'ung Chen (1641 and 1642) Li Tzu-ch'eng's insurgent army won five major campaigns in the Honan battlefield in which 300,000 enemy troops were wiped out. Subsequently, Li led his men to capture Hsiangyang, an important town of Hupeh and was soon in control of the vast territory "bounded by the Yangtze River in the south extending from Sungtzu and Chihchiang to Lichou, bounded by another big river in the north, and extending from Kueite, Juning and Te-an in the east to T'ungkuan in the west."*** The rapid emergence of an upsurge in

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* Marx, "Moral Criticism and Critical Morality," Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. I, p. 181; "Critique of the Gotha Program," Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. III, p. 22.

** History of Ming, Vol. 257, "Biography of Ch'en Hsin-chia."

*** Records of Roving Bandits in Huailing, Vol. XVI, first month of 16th year of Ch'ung Chen.

the peasant revolution was attributable to Li's adherence to the line of peasant uprisings, brought about by the officers and men of the peasant army in their victorious and fierce struggle against the double-dealing tactics of the feudal rulers and the capitulationist current whipped up by the enemies within. It laid the foundation for the triumphant march toward establishing the political power of the peasantry and toppling the Ming rule.

II

"All revolutionary struggles in the world are aimed at seizing political power and consolidating it." The huge victories won by the peasant insurgent army in political and military struggles imposed on it the new task of establishing the revolutionary political power of the peasants and capturing the rule over the whole country. On the cardinal issue revolving around whether to oppose corrupt officials only but not the emperor and uphold feudal rule or to oppose both corrupt officials and the emperor and lead the revolution to all-round victory, the two-line struggle within the insurgent army became increasingly intensified.

If it is said that the Ming rulers, at the development stage of the uprising, pursued a policy of enlistment with the intention of recruiting renegades for the explicit purpose of splitting and disintegrating the peasants' uprisings, then after the uprising had won a decisive victory, this approach would no longer suit the needs of the rulers in putting down the peasant revolution. At that time, wavering elements hiding inside the peasant army "regarded enlistment as the only way to survival, but their hope was dashed following the capture of Loyang."* In these circumstances, the feudal rulers pinned their hopes of strangling the peasant revolution on agents of the landlord class who had sneaked into the peasant army and usurped part of the power. These agents were either alien class elements who infiltrated into the insurgent army or degenerate elements within the peasant army. Serving the needs of the landlord class, they pushed the capitulationist line of opposing corrupt officials only but not the emperor, usurping the insurgents' power of leadership from within, and "revising" the line of peasant uprisings so as to strangle the peasant revolution through coordinated moves both from within and without. Lo Ju-ts'ai and Niu Chin-hsing were striking representatives of this group of people.

Lo Ju-ts'ai, one of the leaders of the 13 divisions of the peasant army, joined the uprising in the first year of Ch'ung Chen as Li Tzu-ch'eng did. He later merged with Li's insurgent army. In his long association with mobile operations, he was hit by the sugar-coated bullets of the landlord class and consequently gave way to a corrupt life style. "Ju-ts'ai

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* Brief Records of Changes in Honan, Vol. IV, fourth month of 15th year of Ch'ung Chen.

was fond of beautiful women and searched for them in places he captured. With concubines numbering hundreds and bands of women musicians, he regaled himself with choice delicacies and entertained his guests with song and dance performances."* Li Tzu-ch'eng once scolded him for being a "debauchee." Lo's betrayal of the laboring people in life style eventually led to his political betrayal. He had accepted the offer of enlistment, and although he later rejoined the insurgent cause he wavered in the end. Between the end of the 15th year of Ch'ung Chen (1642) and beginning of the 16th (1643), when Li Tzu-ch'eng proposed, correctly, establishing a peasant regime before toppling the Ming court, Lo strongly opposed this proposition, yelling: "We find satisfaction in roving over the country. Why keep the territory?"** Vainly trying to pursue the pleasures of life, he sought to abolish the line of peasant uprisings -- seizing political power, opposing the emperor and setting up a peasant revolutionary regime. Ho I-lung and others supported Lo Ju-ts'ai's line. They even suggested "forming a separate army,"*** that is, to split away from Li Tzu-ch'eng's combined forces. Yuan Kuei, Lo's trusted adviser and a Ming scholar who distinguished himself in the imperial civil service examinations, also agitated for secession. He told Lo with the intent of provoking him: "My personal opinion is that Commander Li is not the accommodating type of person. Now all the stalwarts are submissive and we are the only challengers. Why don't you do something for yourself, and early."+ The number of men under Lo and Ho was quite large, and many of them were backbone elements in the early stages of the uprising. If this force were split from the main body of the peasant army, it would bring grave harm to the insurgent cause. Besides, Lo had plotted defection long ago, in the belief that the Ming Dynasty "still has the mandate of Heaven" so he "secretly schemed to surrender by killing Tzu-ch'eng for merit."++ At this crucial juncture of the line struggle, Li Tzu-ch'eng acted quickly and executed Lo Ju-ts'ai, Ho I-lung and Yuan Kuei. By adhering to the line of the peasant uprising, he won the firm support of the peasant army. This fostered the solidarity of the insurgent forces and further strengthened the revolutionary strength.

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* Brief Records of Events in Late Ming, Vol. XIX, "Li Tzu-ch'eng Kills Lo Ju-ts'ai."

** Brief Records of Pacifying Bandits, Vol. IX, "Attack from City to City," Collected Series, p. 190.

*** Ibid.

\+ Ibid.

++ Brief Records of Events in Late Ming, Vol. XIX, "Li Tzu-ch'eng Kills Lo Ju-ts'ai."

Niu Chin-hsing, a native of Paofeng, Honan, taught Confucian classics in his early years. He passed the imperial examinations and was given the title of Chü Jen. But he was later stripped of this honor. In the dog-bites-dog struggle within the landlord class, he was rendered "homeless."* Fears that he might lose his life drove him to join the insurgents. Because Niu had read some of the Sun-Wu art of war and was versed in the tactics of double-dealers in particular, he was able to deceptively gain Li Tzu-ch'eng's trust and usurp some power.

When Li Tzu-ch'eng proposed in Hsiangyang the establishment of a peasant revolutionary regime, Niu Chin-hsing was in fact a confederate of Lo Ju-ts'ai. Acting in concert, both sprang out to voice their objection. At the Hsiangching military conference which decided on the strategy of marching on Peking to overthrow the Ming court, Niu was the first to advance the adventurist proposal of "taking Hopei first before pushing straight toward the capital" -- and the result could only be disadvantageous to the revolution. Niu's view was rejected. Li Tzu-ch'eng adopted the correct policy of capturing Kuanchung first "and consolidating the base of power before attacking Shansi with reinforced troops from the three sides and finally pushing toward the capital, so that we may advance or retreat with ease."** When Li Tzu-ch'eng moved his men northward and engaged in bitter fighting, Niu preached the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius among Li's troops, "explaining a chapter or a section of the Confucian classics every day."+ He was particularly displeased when he found Li's insurgent forces hit hard at the landlord class and its regimes everywhere, alleging that "since he joined the army, he had indoctrinated the army with benevolence and righteousness."++ Thus he made the vain attempt to use the reactionary program of "restraining oneself and returning to propriety" based on the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to poison and disintegrate the insurgent army. This clearly indicated that the reactionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius served as the ideological basis of Niu's espousal of the capitulationist line of opposing corrupt officials only but not the emperor. In the declaration he drafted for the insurgent army, he said that the emperor was good and not benighted but that corrupt officials were bad as they tried to deceive the emperor and exploit the common people.+++ He thus arrived at the conclusion that corrupt officials and not the emperor should be opposed.

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* Ming I-min (Chang I), Sequel to Flattery, Vol. I.

** History of Ming, Vol. 309, "Biography of Li Tzu-ch'eng."

\+ Records of Suppressing Bandits, Vol. VI, sixth month of 16th year of Ch'ung Chen.

++ Sequel to Flattery, Vol. I.

+++ Records of Suppressing Bandits, Vol. IX; see also Sequel to Flattery, Vol. I, for indication that this declaration was drafted by Niu Chin-hsing.

The line of opposing corrupt officials only but not the emperor was a revisionist line that undermined and nullified the peasant revolution and upheld the dark rule of the landlord class. All those who practiced revisionism were capitulationists. In the early part of the 17th year of Ch'ung Chen (1644), Li Tzu-ch'eng's insurgent army founded the state of Ta Shun in Sian. Niu Chin-hsing, who had then usurped the position of Grand Secretary in the Ta Shun peasant regime, secretly submitted a memorial to Ch'ung Chen, without the knowledge of the insurgent army, to pledge his allegiance to the emperor and propose a scheme whereby the peasant uprising could be strangled both from within and without. In the memorial he stated that "if Your Majesty could change your policy and employ virtuous and capable men, your servant will recover the territory and the people that belong to Your Majesty."* This is the confession of a downright renegade and hidden traitor, completely unmasking Niu as a feudal lackey pushing the capitulationist line in order to remain loyal to the emperor. Ch'ung Chen was anxious to use Niu as a life-saving straw. On the eve of the collapse of the Ming court, he decreed "general pardon and reinstatement of dismissed officials."** He put Niu on the top of such a namelist and pinned great hopes on him.

However, Niu Chin-hsing's capitulationist line was unsuccessful. In the process of overthrowing the Ming rule, Li Tzu-ch'eng's insurgent army everywhere seized land belonging to the landlords and carried out the revolutionary policy of "recovering the loots" from the landlords, bureaucrats, the village gentry and wealthy merchants, using the proceeds to keep the soldiers paid and the army going. Both politically and economically, this shook the Ming Dynasty's autocratic regime to its foundations. A pronouncement was also issued to reveal the ruthlessness and decay of the Ming court's feudal rule. It pointed out that the ruling dynasty had come to an end and expressed the revolutionary peasants' determination to oppose corrupt officials as well as the emperor and topple the Ming Dynasty. This won the warm response and hearty support of the peasant masses.

On the 19th day of the 3rd month of the 17th year of Ch'ung Chen, Li Tzu-ch'eng's insurgent army captured Peking, toppled the Ming court, and won a great victory in seizing power by means of violence, signifying the despicable bankruptcy of the capitulationist line pursued by Niu Chin-hsing to oppose corrupt officials but not the emperor.

After the Ming rule was overthrown, the class struggle situation underwent marked changes. Deprived of political power, the landlord class resisted even more rabidly. At the time,not only did the remnant armed forces of the Han landlords remain intact, but the Manchu nobles were poised to make inroads into the Central Plains. New alignments were made

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* Sequel to Flattery, Vol. I.

** Discussion of State Affairs, Vol. 100, 3rd month of 17th year of Ch'ung Chen.

between Manchu and Han landlords and among the Han landlords themselves to conserve strength and prepare to hit back. The collusion between Manchu and Han landlords to put down the peasant uprising could become a reality at any moment. Meanwhile, following the collapse of the Ming Dynasty, large numbers of Ming officials and generals who surrendered adopted different means to worm their way into the Ta Shun regime and engage in feudal restorationist activities on a mass scale. The struggle between the peasants and the landlord class, centering around control of political power, restoration and counter-restoration, raged violently in the military, political and ideological spheres. Reflected within the Ta Shun regime, the two-line struggle found concentrated expression in the issue of whether to uphold the peasant revolution, oppose feudal restoration and exercise dictatorship over the landlord class or to swing the peasant regime toward meeting the needs of the landlord class' restoration and in favor of compromise and surrender and rebuilding the landlord class' rule. Around this question raged the complex and violent struggle between the peasant uprising line reprsented by Li Tzu-ch'eng and the capitulationist line championed by Niu Chin-hsing.

In dealing with the question of the remnant armed forces of the Ming landlords, the insurgent army of Li Tzu-ch'eng, in the light of the situation prevailing at the time, had to advance in the wake of victory without giving the enemy a breathing spell. Wiping out the remnant forces of Ming, particularly Wu San-kuei's troops stationed at Shanhaikuan, would dispel the immediate military threat. But, as Prime Minister, Niu Chin-hsing, together with other surrendered officials of Ming, preached pacifist ideas and prepared coronation ceremonies to lull the revolutionary fighting will of the peasant army. Niu said: "With the capture of the capital, people are astir and therefore no reckless moves should be contemplated. Titles should be conferred and rewards given. If there were signs of agitation, it would not be too late to dispatch an expeditionary force to quell the turmoil."* This was designed to induce the peasant army to stop pursuing the armed forces of the landlords so as to conserve the remnant military strength of the Ming Dynasty before they could fiercely hit back when they recovered from the war wounds. Despite the emergence of notions of conceit and complacency among the insurgents after the collapse of the Ming regime, Li Tzu-ch'ing finally decided to march eastward with his men to fight the armed forces of the Manchu and Han landlords in the Shanhaikuan region, thereby demonstrating the revolutionary spirit of the toiling peasants persisting in struggle.

Following the collapse of the Ming regime, whether to protect or suppress the evil landlords and bureaucrats was a vital matter bearing on whether the new regime could be consolidated. Li Tzu-ch'eng and the other generals of the peasant army such as Liu Tsung-min continued to carry out the revolutionary policy of hitting hard at the landlord class. This so embittered Niu Chin-hsing, agent of the landlord class, that he

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* Sequel to Flattery, Vol. I.

threatened Liu Tsung-min with "a popular revolt" and did his best to block punitive action against landlords and bureaucrats. At the same time, he took advantage of feudal clannish kinship and personal connections to recruit renegades and form a faction for selfish ends. He particularly liked Chou Chung. Banking on Chou's old connections, he selected officials who surrendered and appointed people in obscurity, "thinking of making a comeback."* To recruit writers of landlord origin, he personally held civil service examinations, giving the candidates test questions pervaded with the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, such as "All in the world subscribe to benevolence" and "a benevolent man is blessed by Heaven." When "the results of the examinations were announced at the office of the prime minister, 50 candidates were conferred the title of Chü Jen."** It was not difficult to see that Niu did everything possible to protect the landlord class because he wanted to alter the composition of the peasant regime, form a counter-revolutionary faction for feudal restoration within the insurgent contingent and make organizational preparations for restoring landlord rule. Li Tzu-ch'eng, however, did not lose sight of this and saw to it that conspiracies such as those hatched by people like Niu Chin-hsing would never succeed. The new regime clearly specified that former Ming high officials of 3rd grade and above would not be re-employed and officials who surrendered, whether they were employed or not, were required to surrender their ill-gotten wealth, which would go to the peasant army for its upkeep. The new regime also decreed that "ranking generals are empowered to keep civilian officials under check."+ This insured that the leadership power of the new regime was in the hands of the peasant leaders represented by Li Tzu-ch'eng. In addition, it curbed the powers of those surrendered officials and feudal men of letters installed in various government offices, apart from adhering to the revolutionary policy of hitting hard at the landlord class and preserving the militancy of the peasant regime.

On the question of "ascending to the throne," the two-line struggle also raged fiercely. Niu Chin-hsing as the prime mover behind this idea warned Li Tzu-ch'eng of a "possible change in the state of affairs if the throne is not occupied."++ This was a rabid negation and despicable betrayal of the peasant regime in Hsiangching and Sian. Niu also freed protocol officials of the Ming court from captivity so they could supervise the rehearsal of the feudal ceremony of coronation. This move was angrily

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* Tendering Allegiance, Vol. II.

** Brief Records of Events in late Ming, Vol. XX.

\+ Records of Roving Bandits in Huailing, Vol. XVIII, fourth month of 17th year of Ch'ung Chen.

++ Brief Record of Events in Late Ming, Vol. XX, "Persuasion on Taking the Throne on the 26th Day of the 3rd Moon."

condemned by Li Tzu-ch'eng, who took a seat in the Wenhua Palace in his rustic attire and "occupied the throne with outstretched feet,"* to show a simple peasant's utter scorn for the trappings of the impressive throne. Denouncing Niu for staging a ritualistic farce, he said: "I'll be the Son of Heaven soon. What is the ceremony for?"** This was a forceful rebuttal to the restoration attempt of Niu and the landlord class.

In lifestyle and its related aspects, Niu Chin-hsing and a group of surrendered officials launched unbridled attacks on the Ta Shun peasant regime. They presented gifts of money, offered pretty women, gave dinner parties and indulged in toadyings whenever they could. Niu himself was even more corrupt and decadent. Whenever he left home, he would assume the pompous airs of a feudal bureaucrat -- "sitting in a big sedan chair, carrying a fan with brushed gold frame, and wearing a blue robe with a jade girdle and round collar."*** In the face of the sugar-coated bullet attacks by the landlord class, some officers and men of the insurgent contingent were taken in because they were not equipped to resist such temptations. But Li Tzu-ch'eng still kept to the lifestyle of a toiling peasant and represented the plain features of the revolutionary peasants. He shunned drinking and sex and kept no slave servants. "His dress was no different from that of others."+ "His meals consisted of plain food and he shared weal or woe with those under him."++ He had "no desires for personal gain and worldly possessions."+++ He was concerned with the masses and would often send for the elders to the palace to inquire into the conditions of the populace. Because Li Tzu-ch'eng and his peasant army maintained and carried forward the noble qualities of revolutionary peasants, the new regime did not change its true revolutionary features nor degenerate because of attacks by the landlord class.

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* Records of Suppressing Bandits, Vol. IX, 3rd month of 17th year of Ch'ung Chen.

** Sequel to Flattery, Vol. I.

*** Chia Shen Correspondence, Vol. VI, "The Story of Li Ch'uang." Chinese History Research Series, p. 121.

\+ Ch'a Chi-tso, Kuo Shou Lu, Vol. I, "Biography of Hsü I-yüan, Commander of Palace Guards."

++ History of Ming, Vol. 309, "Biography of Li Tzu-ch'eng."

+++ Records of Suppressing Bandits, Vol. VI, sixth month of 16th year of Ch'ung Chen.

When Li Tzu-ch'eng was leading an expedition against Wu San-kuei in the east, Niu Chin-hsing, who remained in the capital, did what he pleased. He "cultivated contacts and recruited followers everywhere" without doing anything about organizing logistics support for the frontline troops or tracking down and suppressing the reactionary activities of the landlord class. He even kept the capital's nine gates open "to allow people to go out and enter as they please and consequently many officials left the city and proceeded to the south."* This flashed the green light for feudal restoration by those landlords and bureaucrats hostile to the peasant regime. When the troops led by Li Tzu-ch'eng were retreating from Peking, Niu Chin-hsing resorted to the astrologer's tricks and changed his surname from Niu into Mou, at the same time spreading such counter-revolutionary public opinion as "when the yellow ox bears a big load, the Son of Heaven will arise."** He did so to create dissension and plot usurpation and restoration. Finally when he failed to "revise" the peasant insurgent line and was thwarted in his usurpation conspiracy and when the peasant army was stalled in its struggle, Niu and his son quit the insurgent contingent and surrendered to the Manchu nobles. His "ignoble presence in the Temple and feeling ashamed as he faced the place of honor"*** betrayed his true counter-revolutionary features of a faithful lackey of the landlord class.

Despite the combined attacks unleashed by the armed forces of the Manchu and Han landlords, Li Tzu-ch'eng fought unrelentingly and bravely to defend the line of peasant insurgency, and died a martyr.

From the antagonism and struggle between the two lines in the insurgent army of Li Tzu-ch'eng, we can see that although the representatives of the capitulationist line betraying the revolutionary interests of the peasants differed in personal background and in form of expression and tactics, ideologically they all followed the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and were imbued with the decadent notions of the landlord class. Politically they were not against the feudal court and the emperor, and organizationally they undermined unity, created splits, and intrigued and conspired. They were elements of the landlord class inside the peasant insurgent army. The line of peasant uprisings represented by Li Tzu-ch'eng upheld the aspirations and interests of the revolutionary peasants who were opposed to the domination of the landlord class with the emperor as its chieftain, a line that in different forms resisted or struggled against the capitulationist line and its representatives. This shows that the capitulationist line was not the outcome of so-called "peasant limitations" but a reflection within the peasant insurgent contingent of

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* Sequel to Records of Pacifying Bandits, Vol. V, "Appendixes."

** Tendering Allegiance, Vol. V.

*** Manuscripts of History of Ch'ing, Vol. 250, Biography No. 31, "Chi K'ai-sheng."

the interests and political needs of the landlord class. It was a product of the suppression and disintegration of the peasant uprisings by the landlord class, an inevitable phenomenon in class struggle.

"Historical experience merits attention." Classes, class contradictions and class struggle which existed in feudal society determined the existence of the fierce struggle between the two lines -- between revolution and surrender and between restoration and counter-restoration -- in the course of the peasant revolution. Exposing the capitulationists in the peasant insurgent ranks, revealing the reactionary essence of their going in for surrender and restoration, tearing off their assorted disguises, drawing a distinction between revolutionaries and capitulationists and between the insurgent line and the capitulationist line, and "enabling the people to recognize the capitulationists" -- all this is of immediate significance to upholding class struggle as the key link, adhering to the Party's basic line, criticizing Teng Hsiao-p'ing's counter-revolutionary revisionist line, repulsing the Right deviationist attempt to reverse verdicts and carrying the struggle against revisionism and capitulationism through to the end.

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